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SUBJECT: GERMAN PARLIAMENT DEBATES SUPPORT IN DARFUR

Classified By: Political Minister-Counselor John Bauman for Reasons 1.4
(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) A parliamentary debate on the future of German contributions to a peace operation in Darfur shows that there is an emerging - if vague - support for an enhanced operation in Sudan. SPD, Greens and FDP expressed cautious support, depending on the details, of an extended peace support operation in Darfur. The CDU/CSU caucus remains reluctant to support extended German participation in Darfur, partially due to intra-party squabbles and a lack of leadership on this issue. End summary.

Congo Ends, AMIS/Sudan Extended

¶2. (C) With the EUFOR Congo mission nearly complete, the Chancellory is considering ways to increase support in Darfur. According to DAO sources, discussion of possible expanded support has intensified with "capability building" rather than "boots on the ground" the more likely scenerio. No decisions were made prior to the AMIS mandate vote.

¶3. (U) On December 15, the parliament had a one hour debate on the way ahead for German assistance in Sudan followed by a vote on the continuation the Bundeswehr's airlift support operation for the African Union's Darfur operation. With the exception of the Left/PDS caucus, all parties supported the extension, which extends the mission until July 2, 2007.

Red-Green Support

¶4. (U) Parliamentarians from the SPD (commonly known in Germany by the party's red color), the Greens, and the FDP expressed a readiness to support increased German contributions in Darfur, without suggesting specific capabilities. All expressed support for the concept of African ownership of the operation in Darfur. The Greens, especially foreign policy spokeswoman Kerstin Mller, stressed that the "ongoing genocide" requires action.

¶5. (U) SPD defense policy spokesman Rainer Arnold suggested that in the light of a "collapsed peace process" one has to empower the African Union (AU) to do its job properly in Darfur. In this regard he hinted at training and extended logistical and equipment support as key to resolving the problem. Meanwhile, the opposition FDP accused the Merkel government of doing too little, without indicating what the party would support.

CDU/CSU caucus and Defense Minister Jung At Odds over Sudan

¶6. (C) Defense Minister Jung (CDU) attempted to cushion recent criticism from his "own" CDU/CSU caucus by mainly addressing the extension of the existing mandate - the formal reason for the debate. However, differences between Jung, who is supportive of extended support for a UN operation in Darfur, and the CDU/CSU caucus leadership (Kauder/Ramsauer) remain clearly visible.

¶7. (C) Eckart von Klaeden, CDU/CSU spokesman on foreign affairs, repeatedly stressed any Darfur peace operation should only deploy with the consent of the Khartoum government. Klaeden stressed the need for the African Union and the Arab League to do more before other actors should step in. CDU/CSU staffers privately admitted to PolOff that such a requirement would effectively limit additional efforts, as they believe Khartoum is not likely to consent. They note further that the CDU/CSU remains divided on whether Germany has vital interests in Africa. Post will continue to monitor the ongoing debate.
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